

State of West Virginia

5532 MacCorkle Avenue, SW
Post Office Box 9431
South Charleston, WV 25309



Phone: (304) 768-7514
FAX: (304) 768-1407

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

REDISTRICTING NOTES

FROM THE COMMANDER

During my Sr. Vice year, I repeatedly stated that I would appoint a redistricting committee. Accordingly, at the June Convention, I appointed Mike Maphis, Jim Talerico, Bill Lambert, Kevin Light and Chuck Haney as the Committee. Since then, Bill has been spending much time at his new place in Florida, so I have additionally appointed Elmer Hibbs, our Sr. Vice, to take part in the process. Giving credit to personal obligations of the Committee members, and recovering from the National Convention and Youth Camp, the first meeting was accomplished on 8 August in Clarksburg (the day before our first SOI). There were proposals reviewed for a 4, 5, 6 and 7 District plan. The five District plan was collectively settled upon. For the next few weeks administrative work, map design and Post assignment was accomplished. On 2 September, a notice was distributed to all Posts requesting their conveying the proposal to their membership and forwarding resulting constructive comments back to the committee not later than 15 October. This window of 44 days provided a full cycle to cover all Post meetings. Additionally, each District meeting was addressed by Department representatives relative to the issue. To date, there has been and will continue to be an assertive effort to widely disseminate progress and recommendations of the committee.

I want to relate that, as Commander, I have sought the advice and input of three states that have recently accomplished redistricting.

- California, 84,000 members, 24 Districts to 15, maximum number of Posts in a District being 32.
- Kansas, 22,000 members, 9 Districts to 7, maximum number of Posts in a District being 24.
- Georgia, 21,000 members, 12 Districts to 8, maximum number of Posts in a District being 16.

I have had lengthy discussions with the Commanders of the named departments and additionally with one highly respected Past National Commander.

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The next scheduled meeting of the Committee will be during the Southern Conference. The 15 October cutoff date for comments was necessary to allow collections of Post comments and distribution to committee members prior to the November meeting. The final committee meeting and selection of a “settled on” plan for presentation to the COA will be during the Mid-Winter Conference. The COA will effect an up or down vote. If the motion fails there is a strong probability that District 10 Posts will need to be redistributed during the upcoming year. If the proposal passes the following will require being accomplished:

1. Obtaining temporary Charters from National for the purpose of legally electing officers of the new Districts.
2. Meetings will need to be scheduled for the newly formed Districts to conduct election of officers and to select the dates and locations for the 2015/2016 meeting schedule.
3. All funds held by a soon to be Dissolved District need to be forwarded to the Department. The Department will then distribute the funds to new Districts on a pro-rated basis of Posts acquired from a previous, but dissolved, District.
4. All Dissolved District files must be forwarded to Department Headquarters for archiving. All sensitive District files should be purged and personal documentation (214's) should be returned to the respective member by the current Quartermaster or Adjutant.
5. All Districts will potentially be considered new, accordingly, no District will keep its existing charter.

Presently the two most common complaints associated with redistricting have been the increased number of Posts in a District and the required travel time in a geographically large District. In my conversations, it was related to me that these were universally the most prevalent complaints where redistricting took place. At the same time it was related to me that some District Commanders travel up to 12 hours round trip to visit a Post, but more commonly, three to six hours. Additionally, it is commonplace that a District consists of an excess of fifteen Posts. Lastly, it is my hope that Commanders will support the recommendations of the Committee and realize we are working for the long term benefit of the Department. While there is always an element of personal preference, it is the organization that must be given first consideration.